Photo credit: ©Melissa McGaw

LEARN MORE

www.fws.gov/redwolf
www.redwolfssp.org
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KNOXVILLE ZOO TENNESSEE

MUSEUM of LIFE + SCIENCE

POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM
Metro Parks Tacoma

RED WOLVES

Photo credit: John Froschauer

What is a red wolf?

The red wolf (*Canis rufus*) is a native North American canid intermediate in size between coyotes (*C. latrans*) and gray wolves (*C. lupus*). Weighing 45 to 80 pounds, red wolves are about five feet long from nose to tail and stand roughly 26 inches at the shoulder. They have tall pointed ears, long legs, and large feet. Red wolves are typically reddish-brown and buff colored with black along their backs.

photo credit: John Froschauer

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

- **1967** Red wolf listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Preservation Act.
- **1973** Endangered Species Act becomes Federal law.
- **1977** First litter of red wolf pups born in breeding program at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, WA.
- **1980** Red wolf declared biologically extinct in the wild.
- **1987** Restoration effort begins with the experimental release of red wolves at Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, NC.
- **1988** First litter of red wolf pups born in the wild at ARNWR.
- **1992** Experimental release begins at Great Smoky Mountains National Park, NC and TN.
- **1998** Red wolf project ended at GSMNP.
- **2000** Adaptive management plan implemented to address red wolf/coyote hybridization.
- **2007** Red Wolf Recovery Program receives the Association of Zoos and Aquariums North American Conservation Award.
- **Today** The red wolf's future depends on you!

Photo credit: ©Lincoln Park Zoo - Todd Rosenberg Photography

Photo credits left to right: ©Melissa McGaw, Greg Koch

How you can help red wolves:

- **Learn about red wolves and other wildlife. Teach others.** Wolves are often misunderstood. Education is the key. The more you know the more effective you will be at changing attitudes.
- **Visit a place where red wolves live.** Plan a trip to northeastern North Carolina, the only place in the world where wild red wolves live. Visit a zoo or nature center and spend some time at a red wolf exhibit. Go to www.redwolfssp.org to find out where red wolves can be viewed.
- **Get involved.** Support the work of the USFWS and Red Wolf SSP. Join the Red Wolf Coalition. Things get done when people work together.
- **Express your concerns about wildlife.** Talk to elected officials, lawmakers, and leaders of civic and business organizations. Ask them to support wildlife conservation efforts and programs.
- **Protect natural areas.** Wolves and other wildlife need space and wild lands to thrive. Support land conservation initiatives and programs.
- **Reduce your carbon footprint.** Climate change is the most significant challenge facing wildlife today. Do your part by learning about this important topic and take action.

Why do red wolves matter?

Living in a variety of habitats, red wolves help maintain the balance and health of ecosystems by removing old and sick animals. They eat white-tailed deer, raccoons, nutria, rabbits, and small rodents, and provide a benefit by eating small predators that prey on ground-nesting birds, such as quail and turkey. Red wolves have aesthetic value too. Outdoor enthusiasts, including many hunters, say they like being in an environment where the full natural diversity of wildlife still exists. The presence of red wolves contributes significantly to local economies from people wanting to see and learn more about this endangered species.

Why do red wolves need help?

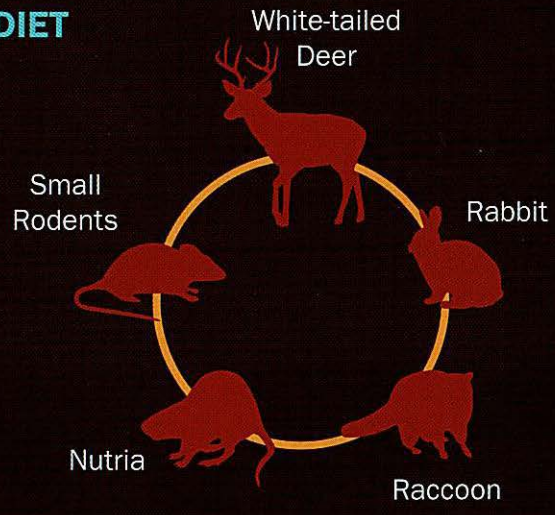
Once a top predator throughout the southeastern United States, the red wolf nearly vanished due to loss of habitat and human persecution. As a result, a managed breeding program was established in 1973 at the Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium to conserve the remaining red wolves and increase their numbers. The success of the breeding program led to the reintroduction of red wolves in 1987 in the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, North Carolina. Red wolves now inhabit a five-county area in northeastern North Carolina, and although their numbers have grown, human caused mortalities, such as gunshot and vehicle strikes, can threaten their survival. The red wolf is one of our planet's most endangered species.

Photo credit: Brad McPhee

SIZE COMPARISON

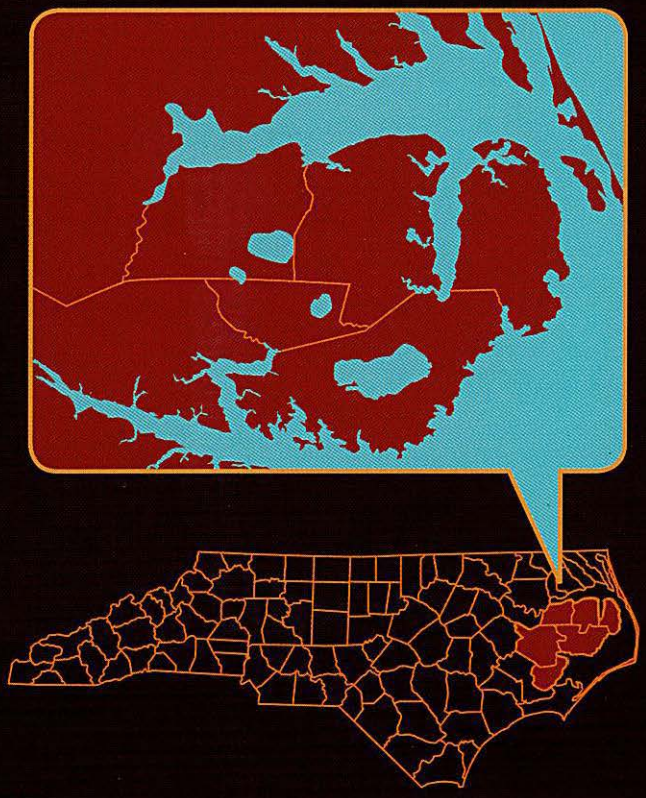
Gray Wolf Red Wolf Coyote

DIET



RED WOLF RECOVERY AREA

Northeastern North Carolina



Who is helping Red Wolves?

Partners make recovery happen! Through the cooperative efforts of many dedicated individuals and organizations, red wolves were saved from extinction and are being restored to parts of their historical range. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), Red Wolf Species Survival Plan® (SSP), and Red Wolf Coalition (RWC) have united to conserve the species.

- The USFWS is the nation's principle conservation agency in charge of protecting and conserving the red wolf. The USFWS Red Wolf Recovery Program is responsible for their recovery and carefully monitors the health and expansion of the wild red wolf population.

- The Red Wolf SSP, in cooperation with the USFWS, serves as a vital safety net by managing red wolves at approved zoos and nature centers around the United States. Red Wolf SSP facilities are essential to the long-term diversity and stability of red wolves.

- The RWC is based in the heart of "red wolf country" and works with other conservation organizations to advocate for the long-term survival of wild red wolf populations. Through outreach and education programs, the RWC promotes public appreciation and involvement in red wolf conservation efforts.